

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 DPW-01 OMB-01 AID-20 SCS-03 SCA-01

DRC-01 /155 W

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R 131052Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9948

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

DEPCH JUSMAAG UDORN THAILAND

CINCPAC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE VIENTIANE 5493

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, LA, CASC

SUBJ: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN GIBSON CASE

REF: VIENTIANE 5324

1. DURING LATE AFTERNOON, FRIDAY, JULY 12, TWO EMBASSY OFFICERS ACCOMPANIED MR GIBSON AND HIS WIFE TO PROSECUTOR'S OFFICES WHERE GIBSONS WERE BRIEFLY QUESTIONED. EMBOFFS MADE EFFORT TO HAVE GIBSONS RE-LEASED FROM DETENTION OVER WEEKEND ON CONSUL'S RECOGNIZANCE, BUT PROSECUTOR (PERHAPS REMEMBERING SGT. CANTU NEVER RETURNED AFTER PROMISING TO DO SO) INSISTED THEY BE REINCARCERATED, THIS TIME AT SAM KHE PRISON.

2. PROSECUTOR GAVE EMBOFFS HIS PERSONAL ASSURANCE THAT

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HE WOULD READ TWO POLICE REPORTS ON GIBSON CASE MONDAY

MORNING AND RENDER A DECISION BY ELEVEN O'CLOCK LOCAL TIME. HE NOTED THAT, SHOULD HE FIND THERE IS A REASONABLE CAUSE IN THE CASE, HE WOULD FORWARD IT TO THE COURT, BUT SHOULD THERE BE AN INSUFFICIENT CAUSE, HE WOULD HAVE THE CASE DROPPED. SHOULD PROSECUTOR FIND REASONABLE CAUSE, HE WOULD INFORM GIBSON OF THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM AND GIBSON COULD THEN OBTAIN LEGAL COUNSEL.

3. IN ABSENCE OF DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE LAO OFFICIALS LATE FRIDAY, AMBASSADOR MADE STRONG REPRESENTATION RE MANNNER WHOLE CASE HAD BEEN HANDLED TO FINANCE MINISTER NGON SANANIKONE AT IMF RECEPTION. NGON AND DCM CHAPMAN THEREUPON WENT TO MEET MINISTER OF JUSTICE KHAMKING SOUVANLASY AT HIS RESIDENCE. AFTER DISCUSSING CASE, KHAMKING MADE CLEAR HE COULD DO NOTHING. NGON THEN WROTE NOTE TO PRISON COMMANDANT, "WHO IS ONE OF OURS," AND SENT IT TO HIM TOGETHER WITH MONEY FOR GIBSONS TO BUY FOOD.

4. DESPITE CONTINUED ILLEGAL DETENTION OF GIBSONS, EVENTS OF JULY 12 CONSITUTE STEP FORWARD IN TERMS OF MOVING CASE TO JUDICIAL PROCESS.

5. ON JULY 13 CONSUL MURPHY VISITED PRISON WITH GIBSON CHILDREN. SHE ASCERTAINED PRISON AUTHORITIES GRANTING GIBSONS SPECIAL PRIVILEGES, INCLUDING VISITS AND DELIVERY OF WESTERN FOOD.
WHITEHOUSE

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